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2
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2
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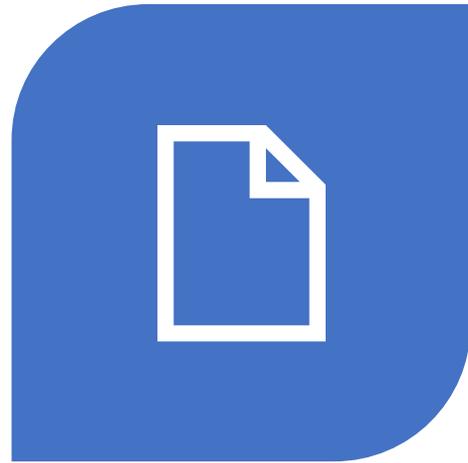
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SHIPMENT CONFLICT
Pak. says forces killed 67 Afghan troops
WORLD'S PAGE 14

MARITIME CONCERNS
Centre inks deal to strengthen security
NEWS'S PAGE 4

NATURAL ACCIDENT
Six killed as sleeper bus collides with van
NEWS'S PAGE 8

VOLATILE TRADE
Pakistan's arms deals demand India's attention
Arms deal surge tilts geopolitics
EDITORIAL'S PAGE 9

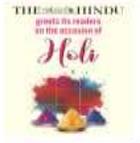
SEMIFINAL BATTLE
Proteas hold the edge against Black Caps
SPORTS'S PAGE 10

INSIDE



Bharti net traffic to Europe facing huge disruptions

NEW DELHI Bharti Airtel Ltd's network has been facing disruptions in Europe-bound traffic for multiple weeks, leading to cloud providers such as Digital Ocean and AWS Cloud to shift bulk data flows to other transit providers. **PAGE 12**



MGNREGS app glitches flagged by workers

NEW DELHI Several workers enrolled under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) have raised complaints about glitches after the recent update to the National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS), the mobile application used for attendance. **PAGE 5**

UBA finishes 1.2 crore updates of schoolchildren

NEW DELHI The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) said it has completed mandatory biometric updates for 1.2 crore children between the ages of seven and 18 through large-scale drives conducted in schools. **PAGE 8**

Battered Iran attacks economic targets

Tehran strikes U.S. embassies in Saudi, Kuwait; Israel bombs remaining Iranian leadership, troops push deeper into Lebanon, targeting Hezbollah | President Trump says he has rebuffed attempt by Tehran to open negotiations as coming 'too late'

Arms France Presses

Iran stepped up its attacks on economic targets and U.S. missions across West Asia on Tuesday as U.S. President Donald Trump said the U.S.-led strikes have inflicted wide damages on the Islamic Republic while warning it was "too late" for it to seek talks to escape the war.

Embassy urges Indians in Iran to 'stay indoors'

India nationals in Iran are advised to exercise utmost caution, avoid unnecessary movements and remain indoors as far as possible in the Iranian Embassy in Tehran said in a fresh advisory.

More than 280 flights were cancelled at Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai on Tuesday

Indian airlines, including Indigo, Air India, Air India Express and SpiceJet, are operating over 12 special flights to various cities in Saudi Arabia and the UAE to bring back passengers stranded due to the escalating conflict in West Asia.

Airlines operating over 12 special flights

Iranian military said it had struck more than 100 targets of the militant group. The Lebanese government had banned military activities by Hezbollah on Monday after it opened fire on Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader. At least 40 people have been killed in Israeli attacks on Lebanon on Monday and Tuesday, a spokesperson for Lebanon's Health Ministry said.

'India has crude oil stocks for 25 days'

India has sufficient stocks of crude oil and energy products (petrol and diesel) for the next 25 days each, cumulatively accounting for 80 days of self-sufficiency, sources in the government said.

Proteas hold the edge against Black Caps

In a press statement, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry said it established a 24x7 control room to monitor the supply and stock position.

U.S. and Israeli strikes also targeted the building housing the committee that is to elect Iran's new Supreme Leader, Iranian media reported.

The conflict escalated further on its fourth day, with Israel ordering the military to take control of more positions inside Lebanon to create a buffer zone, as the Lebanese Army pulled back some of its forces after Hezbollah attacked Israeli bases.

Iran's nuclear program suspended, U.N. production, sending European energy prices skyrocketing.

An attack from two drones on the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh caused a "fire" in the building, according to Saudi Arabia's Defence Ministry, and the embassy urged Americans to avoid the compound. It followed an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait, that announced it had been closed until further notice.

Attack warning

The crisis in Riyadh on Tuesday warned of an imminent power plant, the Melur news agency reported.

U.S. military strikes have

hit more than 500 locations in Iran since the start of the conflict, killing at least 297 people, according to the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

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U.S. and Israeli strikes have

hit more than 500 locations in Iran since the start of the conflict, killing at least 297 people, according to the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

Poll dates for 4 States, 1 UT, likely to be announced after EC review next week

Asoparam Chakrabarty

NEW DELHI The Election Commission (EC) will visit Kerala on March 6-7 and West Bengal on March 9-10 to review preparations for the coming Assembly elections. Sources in the poll body said the schedule for Assembly elections in Kerala, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Puducherry will be announced next week.

The terms of the Assam and West Bengal elections will be announced next week. The Commission, led by Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, has already visited Tamil Nadu, Assam, and the Union Territory of Puducherry for review meetings.

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Chidambaram-Stalin meet fails to break seat-sharing deadlock in T.N.

B. Kolappan

CHENNAI Despite senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram folding an hour-long meeting with DMK president and Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday to break the deadlock over seat-sharing for the Tamil Nadu Assembly election, the gap between the Congress expectations and the DMK's offer proved only a narrow one from halting a pact.

Sources said the DMK raised its offer from 28 to 27 Assembly seats and one Rajya Sabha seat. But the Congress demands 30 Assembly seats and a Rajya Sabha seat. The two parties are expected to hold another round of talks on Wednesday.

Mr. Chidambaram conveyed the DMK's offer to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge. Mr. Kharge, along with Sonia Gandhi, had asked Mr. Chidambaram to negotiate on the party's behalf. However, the proposed seats Rajat Gandhi's

parties would hold talks to finalise a seat-sharing agreement for the Assembly election. There are three more Rajya Sabha seats, which the DMK can fill with support from its allies during the March 16 biennial elections. The party has earmarked two for its own candidates. However, the DMK was unable to announce its candidates as it has not received any response from the Congress leadership to its offer.

Battered Iran attacks economic targets

Tehran strikes U.S. embassies in Saudi, Kuwait; energy facilities in the region come under attack

Israel bombs remaining Iranian leadership, troops push deeper into Lebanon, targeting Hezbollah

President Trump says he has rebuffed attempt by Tehran to open negotiations as coming 'too late'

Agence France-Presse
DUBAI

Iran stepped up its attacks on economic targets and U.S. missions across West Asia on Tuesday as U.S. President Donald Trump said the U.S.-Israel strikes have inflicted wide damages on the Islamic Republic while warning it was "too late" for it to seek talks to escape the war.

As drones and missiles crashed into oil facilities and U.S. embassies in the region, Washington's ally Israel bombarded targets in Iran and pushed troops deeper into Lebanon to battle the Tehran-backed militia Hezbollah.

Loud explosions were heard in Iraq's Erbil and across cities of Doha, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi in the UAE on Tuesday night, which Dubai authorities said were caused by "interception operations" by air defence forces.

Tuesday's attacks came after Iran widened its targets in the war in its fourth day to include infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar – where the state-run energy firm suspended LNG production, sending European energy prices skyrocketing.

An attack from two drones on the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh caused a "limited fire", according to Saudi Arabia's Defence Ministry, and the embassy urged Americans to avoid the compound. It followed an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait, that announced it had been closed until further notice.

Attack warning
The embassy in Riyadh on Tuesday warned of an imminent attack in the eastern city of Dhahran, home to much of the Saudi Arabia oil and gas installations.

U.S.-Israeli strikes have



Grey horizon: A tall plume of black smoke rises following an explosion in the UAE's Fujairah industrial zone on Tuesday. AFP

Embassy urges Indians in Iran to 'stay indoors'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday advised its nationals in Iran to exercise utmost caution and remain indoors as far

as possible as the security situation in the West Asian nation deteriorated in view of fresh military strikes by the U.S. and Israel. "In view of the developing situation, all

Indian nationals in Iran are advised to exercise utmost caution, avoid unnecessary movements and remain indoors as far as possible," the Indian Embassy in Tehran said in

a fresh advisory.

"Indians may also continue to monitor the news, maintain situational awareness and await any further guidance from the Embassy of India," it said.

hit more than 500 locations in Iran since the start of the conflict, killing at least 787 people, according to the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

U.S. and Israeli strikes also targeted the building housing the committee that is to elect Iran's new Supreme Leader, Iranian media reported. The strikes also caused damage at an airport in Bushehr, a port city that also hosts a nuclear power plant, the Mehr news agency reported.

"The military has launched a ninth wave of strikes in Tehran. The Air

Force has now begun a large-scale wave of strikes targeting the Iranian terror regime's infrastructure in Tehran," the Israeli military said. "Their air defence, air force, navy, and leadership is gone. They want to talk. I said: 'Too late!'," Mr. Trump said.

"Just about everything's been knocked out," Mr. Trump said as he met German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, answering his first questions from reporters since the strikes began on Saturday.

The conflict escalated further on its fourth day, with Israel ordering the

military to take control of more positions inside Lebanon to create a buffer zone, as the Lebanese Army pulled back some of its forces after Hezbollah attacked Israeli bases.

Israel sent troops into Lebanon on Tuesday and warned residents of over 80 villages to evacuate as the Iran-backed militant Hezbollah group said it was ready for an "open war" with Israel.

The Israeli military said it had struck more than 160 targets of the militant group. The Lebanese government had banned military activities by Hez-

lah on Monday after it opened fire on Israel in retaliation for the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader. At least 40 people have been killed in Israeli attacks on Lebanon on Monday and Tuesday, a spokesperson for Lebanon's Health Ministry said.

Lebanese authorities said more than 58,000 people have been forced to flee their homes.

Tehran's UN ambassador said on Tuesday the U.S. made a "totally stupid decision" to attack Iran while in talks, and betrayed Gulf nations by trashing diplomatic efforts.

'India has crude oil stocks for 25 days'

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

India has sufficient stocks of crude oil and energy products (petrol and diesel) for the next 25 days each, cumulatively accounting for 50 days of sufficiency, sources in the government said.

"We are in a reasonably comfortable position as far as crude oil is concerned," a source said, adding, "We have crude oil in reserve for 25 days alongside energy products for 25 days."

The source said the crude reserve does not include that from the emergency-earmarked Special Petroleum Reserve (SPR).

Concerns over India's fuel stock position emerged as tensions rose

in West Asia with Israel and U.S. launching strikes on Iran inviting retaliatory attacks by Tehran on Washington's regional allies.

The sources added India was "comfortably placed" with respect to liquefied natural gas (LNG) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). India had sufficient LNG supplies for the next two to three weeks.

In a press statement, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry said it established a 24x7 control room to monitor the supply and stock position.

"At present, the Government is reasonably comfortable in terms of stocks. Safeguarding interests of Indian consumers is the highest priority," the Ministry said.

Airlines operating over 12 special flights

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Indian airlines, including IndiGo, Air India, Air India Express and Spicejet, are operating over 12 special flights to various cities in Saudi Arabia and the UAE to bring back passengers stranded due to the escalating conflict in West Asia.

Air India Express resumed its services to Muscat (Oman) on Tuesday, and IndiGo will restart services to Muscat, and Jeddah and Medina in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday.

Air India operated two special relief flights to Jeddah and Dubai on Tuesday, and will operate another

More than 250 flights were cancelled at Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai on Tuesday

such flight to Dubai from Mumbai on March 4.

On Tuesday, Air India Express operated three special flights – Dubai-Bangalore, Abu Dhabi-Delhi and Sharjah-Mumbai.

IndiGo said it was operating four repatriation flights to Jeddah.

Meanwhile, more than 250 flights were cancelled at the Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai airports on Tuesday, officials said.

1. Security Advisory by India

भारत द्वारा सुरक्षा सलाह

- India advised its citizens in Iran to stay indoors and avoid unnecessary travel due to the deteriorating security situation in West Asia.
भारत ने ईरान में रह रहे अपने नागरिकों को पश्चिम एशिया में बिगड़ती सुरक्षा स्थिति के कारण घर के अंदर रहने और अनावश्यक यात्रा से बचने की सलाह दी।
 - The advisory was issued by the Indian Embassy in Tehran after intensified strikes involving the U.S., Israel, and Iran.
यह सलाह तेहरान स्थित भारतीय दूतावास द्वारा अमेरिका, इज़राइल और ईरान के बीच बढ़ते सैन्य हमलों के बाद जारी की गई।
 - Indians were also asked to remain alert and follow further instructions from the embassy.
भारतीय नागरिकों से सतर्क रहने और दूतावास के आगे के निर्देशों का पालन करने को कहा गया।
-

2. Escalation of Conflict in West Asia

पश्चिम एशिया में संघर्ष का विस्तार

- Iran intensified attacks on U.S. bases and economic targets across West Asia.
ईरान ने पश्चिम एशिया में अमेरिकी सैन्य ठिकानों और आर्थिक लक्ष्यों पर हमले तेज कर दिए।
- Iranian drones and missiles reportedly targeted oil facilities and U.S. embassies in the region.
ईरानी ड्रोन और मिसाइलों ने क्षेत्र में तेल प्रतिष्ठानों और अमेरिकी दूतावासों को निशाना बनाया।
- The U.S. and Israel have launched coordinated strikes against Iranian military infrastructure.
अमेरिका और इज़राइल ने ईरान की सैन्य संरचनाओं पर संयुक्त हमले किए।

3. Expansion of the War into Lebanon

लेबनान तक युद्ध का विस्तार

- Israel launched attacks deeper into Lebanon targeting Hezbollah positions.
इज़राइल ने हिज़्बुल्लाह के ठिकानों को निशाना बनाते हुए लेबनान में गहरे हमले किए।
 - Israeli forces warned civilians in southern Lebanon to evacuate.
इज़राइली सेना ने दक्षिणी लेबनान के नागरिकों को क्षेत्र खाली करने की चेतावनी दी।
 - Hezbollah militants have already launched hundreds of attacks against Israel.
हिज़्बुल्लाह लड़ाकों ने पहले ही इज़राइल पर सैकड़ों हमले किए हैं।
-

4. Economic and Energy Impact

आर्थिक और ऊर्जा प्रभाव

- Iranian attacks targeted oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar.
ईरान के हमलों ने सऊदी अरब, यूएई और कतर की तेल अवसंरचना को निशाना बनाया।
- LNG production in Qatar and the UAE was temporarily disrupted.
कतर और यूएई में एलएनजी उत्पादन अस्थायी रूप से बाधित हुआ।
- Energy prices in Europe and global markets surged due to supply disruptions.
आपूर्ति बाधित होने से यूरोप और वैश्विक बाजारों में ऊर्जा कीमतें बढ़ गईं।

1. Historical Background of Iran–US Conflict

ईरान-अमेरिका संघर्ष का इतिहास

- 1953 CIA-backed coup removed Iranian PM Mohammad Mossadegh.
1953 में सीआईए समर्थित तख्तापलट में ईरान के प्रधानमंत्री मोहम्मद मोसद्देक को हटाया गया।
 - 1979 Iranian Revolution established an Islamic Republic under Ayatollah Khomeini.
1979 की ईरानी क्रांति के बाद आयतुल्ला खोमेनी के नेतृत्व में इस्लामी गणराज्य स्थापित हुआ।
 - U.S. embassy hostage crisis lasted 444 days.
अमेरिकी दूतावास बंधक संकट 444 दिनों तक चला।
-

2. Political Dimension

राजनीतिक आयाम

- Iran supports groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza.
ईरान लेबनान में हिज़्बुल्लाह और गाजा में हमास जैसे संगठनों का समर्थन करता है।
- Israel considers Iran's nuclear program a major threat.
इज़राइल ईरान के परमाणु कार्यक्रम को बड़ा खतरा मानता है।
- The U.S. backs Israel militarily and politically in the region.
अमेरिका क्षेत्र में इज़राइल का सैन्य और राजनीतिक समर्थन करता है।

3. Geographical Importance of the Region

क्षेत्र का भौगोलिक महत्व

- West Asia contains the world's largest oil reserves.
पश्चिम एशिया में दुनिया के सबसे बड़े तेल भंडार हैं।
 - Strait of Hormuz handles nearly **20–30% of global oil trade**.
होर्मुज जलडमरूमध्य से लगभग **20–30% वैश्विक तेल व्यापार** गुजरता है।
 - Iran borders the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea.
ईरान की सीमा फारस की खाड़ी और कैस्पियन सागर से लगती है।
-

4. Economic Impact Globally

वैश्विक आर्थिक प्रभाव

- Oil prices increase rapidly during Middle East conflicts.
मध्य पूर्व में संघर्ष होने पर तेल की कीमतें तेजी से बढ़ती हैं।
 - Shipping insurance costs rise due to security risks.
सुरक्षा जोखिम बढ़ने से समुद्री बीमा लागत बढ़ जाती है।
 - Energy-importing countries like India face inflation pressure.
भारत जैसे ऊर्जा आयातक देशों पर महंगाई का दबाव बढ़ जाता है।
-

IRAN-BACKED GROUPS

SOURCE: STATE DEPARTMENT, NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER



LEBANON

HEZBOLLAH

SYRIA



KATAIB
HEZBOLLAH

IRAQ

IRAN

GAZA

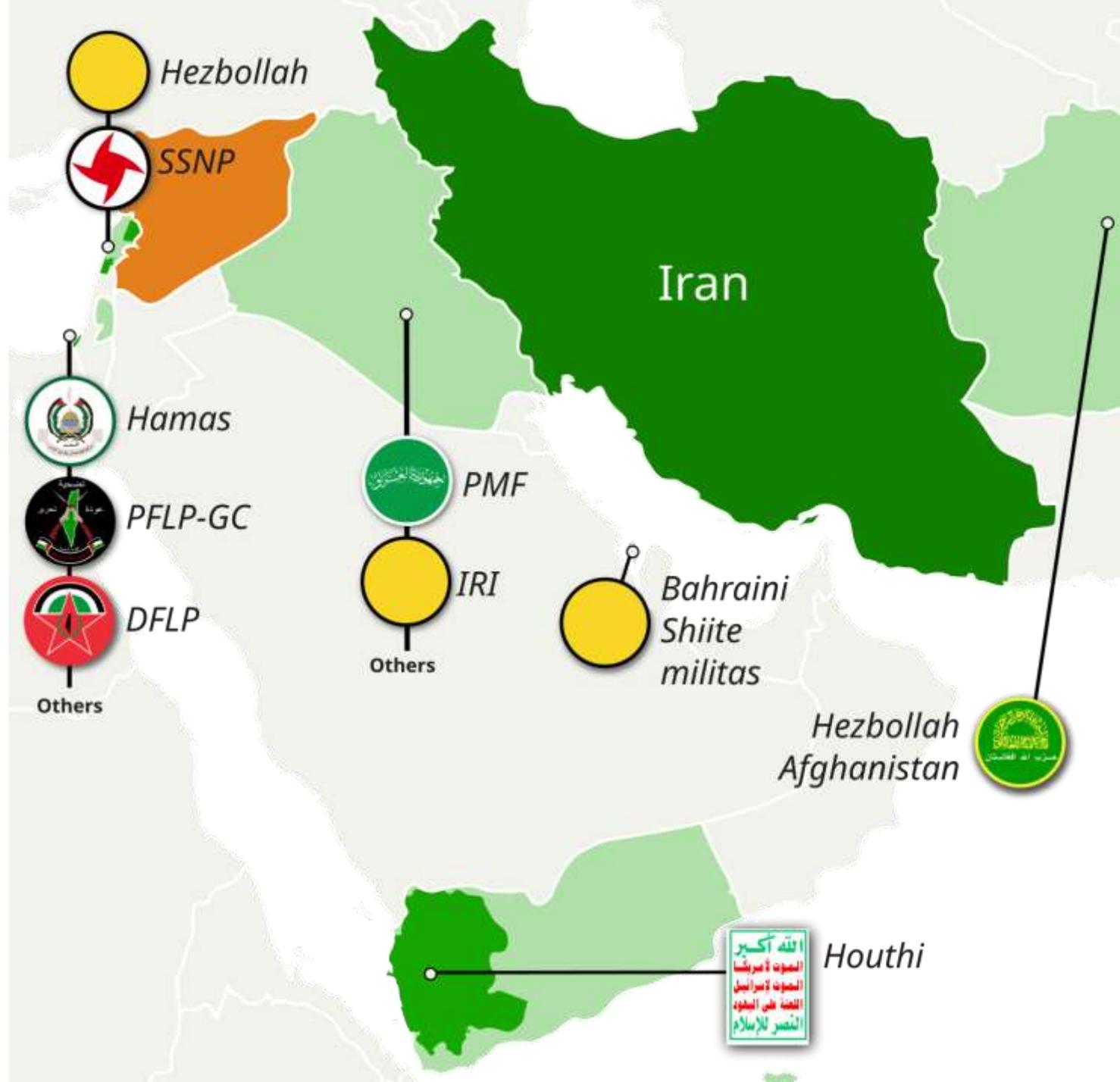


HAMAS

YEMEN

HOUTH
REBELS

ARABIAN
SEA



Ravi Shankar Prasad to head LS panel on privileges

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Tuesday reconstituted the Committee of Privileges.

The panel, tasked with examining issues related to breaches of parliamentary privilege and recommending appropriate action, will be chaired by BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad.

The other members nominated are Bipinohan Agrawal (BJP), Faruq Anwar (Congress), Manickam Velupillai Prasad (DMK), Kalyani Bhanerjee (Congress), G. Prasad (Congress), Bhishag Naray (BJP), Kanwar Singh Bedi (BJP), Sarangjit Singh (Congress), Singh Deo (BJP), Jagdish Kumar (BJP), Triwinda Singh Rawat (BJP), Anand Kumar (Congress), Jagdish Kumar (BJP), Manish Tewari (Congress), and Dharmendra Yadav (Congress).

The Committee of Privileges examines cases referred by the speaker and submits reports on matters where breaches of privilege are alleged.

Centre inks ₹5,000-cr. deal to strengthen maritime security

Coast Guard to get six AlH Mk-III helicopters from HAL. Russian Shtil missiles to be installed on Navy's frontline warships, acquisitions aim to enhance air defence and generate job opportunities

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The Defence Ministry on Tuesday signed a contract worth ₹5,000 crore for the acquisition of six AlH Mk-III helicopters (maritime role) for the Indian Coast Guard.

The contract for the six choppers, along with operational role equipment, an engineering support package, and performance based logistics support, was valued at ₹2,000 crore. The deal was signed with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.

The purchase comes under the category of indigenously designed, developed and manufactured products, the Ministry said.

The twin-engine helicopters incorporate state-of-the-art features superior to the airborne platform



Wingco website: The AlH Mk-III choppers will enhance protection of artificial islands and offshore installations. | Saurabh Trivedi

currently in operation, and are capable of undertaking a wide spectrum of maritime security missions from shore based airfields as well as from ships at sea.

The project envisages supply of equipment from a wide spectrum of maritime security missions from shore based airfields as well as from ships at sea.

The acquisition is aimed at substantially enhancing the air defence capabilities of warships on the front line against a wide spectrum of aerial threats, the Ministry said.

It also includes the acquisition of six AlH Mk-III helicopters from HAL. The project envisages supply of equipment from a wide spectrum of maritime security missions from shore based airfields as well as from ships at sea.

The acquisition is aimed at substantially enhancing the air defence capabilities of warships on the front line against a wide spectrum of aerial threats, the Ministry said.

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The acquisition is aimed at substantially enhancing the air defence capabilities of warships on the front line against a wide spectrum of aerial threats, the Ministry said.

Gaurav Gogoi, 41 others in Congress's first list for Assam Assembly election

Rahul Karmakar
DISPURA

Gaurav Gogoi, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, figures in the first list of 42 candidates released by the Congress for the Assam Assembly polls on Tuesday.

The list, released by the party's Central Election Committee, has a mix of experienced leaders and new faces. The party has retained five sitting MLAs, including Leader of the Opposition in the State Assam Debbarati Baidya, and fielded former State president Ripon Borah among others.

The party is seeking Mr. Gogoi to lead the Congress assembly constituency, where a keen contest between the Congress and the ruling BJP is anticipated. The contest is expected to be in the presence of Deputy Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh at South Block, New Delhi.



Gaurav Gogoi

The party has retained five sitting MLAs, including Leader of the Opposition in the State Assam Debbarati Baidya, and fielded former State president Ripon Borah among others. The party is seeking Mr. Gogoi to lead the Congress assembly constituency, where a keen contest between the Congress and the ruling BJP is anticipated.

always with grace, joy and dignity. To my fellow Congress brothers, sisters, colleagues and elders, the time is now to take Assam in a new and bold direction. Be posted on X.

Women candidates
Among those re-nominated is Nandini Das (Boko-Chhaygan), one of five women candidates. The others are former Minister Pranati Phukan from Narkatia, Mira Borahkar Goswami from Daparg, Palabi Sabha Gogoi from Teok, and Sarada Roy from Kam Krishna Nagar.

The list has the names of three sitting MLAs: Palabi Sabha Gogoi from Teok, and Sarada Roy from Kam Krishna Nagar.

The notable names include former Minister Ajit Singh, former MLA Karu Sen Sinha, former Union Minister Paban Singh Chatterjee's son Prangal Chatterjee and Dhruvi MP Rakesh Kumar's son Tanu Humain.

'Freedom to dissent also part of Judicial independence'

Krishnakumar Balagopal
NEW DELHI

'Judicial independence' was not limited to insulation from political pressure, institutional intimidation, or popular demand, but extended to every individual judge's autonomy to disagree or diverge from the opinions of his or her colleagues in the court, Supreme Court judge BV Nagarathna said on Tuesday.

'Judicial independence is not exhausted by insulation from the political branches. It also requires that each judge be free to form and express his or her own considered view of the law, even when that view diverges from colleagues,' Justice Nagarathna said in an address at the Kerala High Court.

Justice Nagarathna, who is in line to be the first woman Chief Justice of India in 2027, is widely respected for her lone dissent, including on the Constitution Bench in the demonstration case, and her objection in the Supreme Court Collegium to the recommendation for appointment of a judge to the top court in 2023.

Intellectual autonomy
The judge said separate and dissenting opinions were manifestations of intellectual autonomy and these expressions, given without fear or favour for the sake of institutional integrity alone, was the 'independence of the judiciary in its most enlightened form.'

'A judicial opinion is not a negotiation document. It is an articulation of one's rational conviction. If the law, as we understand it, requires clarity, the business is that dilution for the sake of consensus is a form of compromise we should be unwilling to make,' Justice Nagarathna said in her Justice T.R. Krishnamoorthy Iyer Memorial Orator.

Besides independence from external influence, judicial independence also operated subtly from within the judicial institution, she said.

BJP president Nitin Nabin set for Rajya Sabha entry; party rewards performers with ticket

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday nominated Nitin Nabin, as the party's candidate for the Rajya Sabha polls from Bihar.

Nabin's nomination and subsequent election will entail his resignation from the Bihar Assembly, where he is a member, and a full-time shift to Delhi, imperative for the national president.

Former MLA Shivshankar Kumar is the party's second nominee from the State. He is a leader from the Raufai community and the son of Manoj Lal, a former IAS officer and Minister in the Vajpayee government.

Five Rajya Sabha seats from Bihar are going to the polls, with NDA allies BJP and Janta Dal(U) contesting two seats each. The al-

liance can win the fifth seat if it manages three Opposition votes. BJP ally and Manjuria Lok Morcha chief Upendra Kushwaha has announced himself as the fifth nominee. He is likely to get support from the NDA allies.

Nominations from the poll-bound states of Assam and West Bengal signal that the new candidates will be fielded for the Assembly elections with state leaders being moved to Delhi. A Minister in the Himanta Sarma government, Jogen Mehta, and sitting MLA Tarash Goswami, who are close to Union Shipping Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, have been nominated for the Upper House. Mr. Mohan is the MLA from Mahuva in Upper Assam, while Mr. Goswami, who comes from the community of tea garden workers, is the MLA from Duhagan, an important oil township.

78 BJP seats in the Assembly and support of three independent MLAs, the two candidates will comfortably win.

Mr. Sarwat, who was credited with leading the party to its crushing victory in the assembly election, was expected to be rehabilitated following its loss from Chandrabill in the State polls. Mr. Sarwat was initially elected to the Upper House as a BJP Janata Dal ally. Following his resignation, the BJP retained him as its MP for the West Bengal seat. Now, he will contest for a full Rajya Sabha seat.

BJP Raj, former Union Coal Minister, has announced that he will contest as an independent candidate from Odisha. Mr. Sarwat said the party has in principle decided to support the resignation of Mr. Sarwat from Haryana, the BJP has named Sanjay Bhaskar, a former Lok Sabha member

who was actively involved in the BJP's Assembly election management in the State. Considered a close confidant of former Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Mr. Bhaskar was elected to the Lok Sabha from Karnal in 2019.

The practice of rewarding organisational personnel with Rajya Sabha seats is seen in the nomination from Chhattisgarh as well, with State BJP vice-president Laxmi Verma being given ticket. Mr. Verma, who is from the Bhojpur community, has been Rajya Sabha district panchayat chief and the party's State women's wing president.

The BJP is yet to announce nominees from Maharashtra, where its Mr. Sarwat said the party has in principle decided to support the resignation of Mr. Sarwat from Haryana, the BJP has named Sanjay Bhaskar, a former Lok Sabha member

Manipur youth embark on 'national integration tour'

Vijaya Singh
NEW DELHI

Manipur Chief Minister Nimesh Kumar on Tuesday flagged off a national integration tour organised by the Assam Rifles, with Meitei, Khasi, Jaintia and Garo (Mei-Ja-Ga) participants, the first of its kind since the insurgency began in the state in May 2002.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said, "Despite the differences, elders should not spoil the future of our children. We should forgive and forget the past and jointly head towards a brighter, peaceful and developed in the State."

According to a statement from the Chief Minister's office, the tour will consist of each from the four communities - are part of the tour. They will travel to Imphal, Thiruvananthapuram, Kanyakumaram, Mumbai and Kolkata from March 3 to 13.



Building Bonds: Manipur CM flagging off the National Integration Tour, organised by Assam Rifles in Imphal on Tuesday. | Vijaya Singh

comprising one member from each community were formed, and a flag symbolising collective harmony and shared identity was handed over to them. Officials of the Assam Rifles also accompanied Mr. Singh to a group of National Cadets' meeting. A separate and dedicated role in carrying out the relocation process.

As part of the programme, the Chief Minister interacted with the participants. Groups

Boy lynched in Odisha over suspicion of goat theft

The Hindu Bureau
Bhubaneswar

A 15-year-old was allegedly lynched in Odisha by a mob who accused him of stealing goats in Mayurbhanj district on Tuesday. Another boy is battling a similar charge in the same district.

The Odisha Police have arrested 12 persons in connection with the case. The mob, which included a woman, was increased over regular disappearance of goats. They stopped the victims, both from Bhubaneswar and Mayurbhanj, passing by on a motorcycle and questioned them. The only CPDM leader to be lynched was Santoshi Rana in 1977.

Stalemate persists in CPI(M)-Left Front tie-up in West Bengal

Sobhana K. Sair
NEW DELHI

Despite several rounds of talks within the Left Front over a seat-sharing arrangement for the upcoming West Bengal Assembly election, there has been no headway, CPI(M) general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya told *The Hindu*.

The only CPDM leader to be lynched was Santoshi Rana in 1977. The Left Front has faced poorly in the last two Assembly elections. In 2021, the Left parties drew a blank, while the Indian Secular Front (ISF), a new

Premise of IBC is to avoid delay, says top court

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) represents a conscious legislative choice to privilege speed, certainty, and creditor-driven decision-making over 'extensive' judicial scrutiny, the Supreme Court said. The court said the very premise of the IBC was to prevent delay and uncertainty.

The judgment, by a bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and H. Muralidhar, came after appeals filed against a National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) order in a matter pertaining to the approval of a resolution plan submitted by a firm. The court reiterated the settled law that the commercial wisdom of the Committee of Creditors enjoyed primacy and could not be supplanted by judicial review.

The last date of nominations in March 5. The polls will be held on March 16.

Boy lynched in Odisha over suspicion of goat theft

The Hindu Bureau
Bhubaneswar

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The Left Front has faced poorly in the last two Assembly elections. In 2021, the Left parties drew a blank, while the Indian Secular Front (ISF), a new

Centre inks ₹5,000-cr. deal to strengthen maritime security

Coast Guard to get six ALH Mk-III helicopters from HAL; Russian Shtil missiles to be installed on Navy's frontline warships; acquisitions aim to enhance air defence and generate job opportunities

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The Defence Ministry on Tuesday signed contracts worth ₹5,083 crore for the acquisition of six Advanced Light Helicopters Mk-III (maritime role) for the Indian Coast Guard and Shtil surface-to-air vertical launch missiles for the Indian Navy.

The contract for the six choppers, along with operational role equipment, an engineering support package, and performance-based logistics support, valued at ₹2,901 crore, has been signed with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.

Indigenous push

The purchase comes under the category of indigenously designed, developed, and manufactured products, the Ministry said.

The twin-engine helicopters incorporate state-of-the-art features superior to the airborne platforms



Winged watch: The ALH Mk-III choppers will enhance protection of artificial islands and offshore installations. L. BALACHANDAR

currently in operation, and are capable of undertaking a wide spectrum of maritime security missions from shore-based airfields as well as from ships at sea.

Their induction is expected to significantly enhance the Indian Coast Guard's capability to ensure the safety and protection of artificial islands, offshore installations, and fishermen, as well as safeguarding the marine environment, the Ministry

said. The project envisages supply of equipment from more than 200 MSMEs and is expected to generate approximately 65 lakh man-hours of employment.

The contract reinforces the government's commitment to Aatmanirbhar Bharat, or resilient India, and the Make-in-India initiative, while strengthening the country's maritime security architecture, it added.

Separately, the contract

for the procurement of Shtil missiles and associated missile holding frames, valued at ₹2,182 crore, has been signed with JSC Rosoboronexport, a state-run company of the Russian Federation.

The acquisition is aimed at substantially enhancing the air defence capabilities of warships on the front line against a wide spectrum of aerial threats, the Ministry said.

Rapid reaction

The system will bolster the layered air defence architecture aboard Indian Navy platforms by providing rapid-reaction, all-weather engagement capability and improved survivability in contested maritime environments. The contract underscores the long-standing defence partnership between India and Russia.

The contracts were inked in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh at South Block in New Delhi.

1. Defence Ministry signed major contracts

रक्षा मंत्रालय ने बड़े रक्षा समझौते किए

- India's Defence Ministry signed defence contracts worth about **₹5,083 crore** to strengthen maritime security.

भारत के रक्षा मंत्रालय ने समुद्री सुरक्षा मजबूत करने के लिए लगभग **₹5,083 करोड़** के रक्षा समझौतों पर हस्ताक्षर किए।

- The contracts include **six Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH Mk-III)** for the Indian Coast Guard and **Shtil surface-to-air missiles** for the Indian Navy.

इन समझौतों में भारतीय तटरक्षक बल के लिए छह एडवांस्ड लाइट हेलीकॉप्टर (ALH Mk-III) और भारतीय नौसेना के लिए Shtil सतह-से-आकाश मिसाइलें शामिल हैं।

2. Contract for ALH Mk-III Helicopters

ALH Mk-III हेलीकॉप्टर के लिए अनुबंध

- The helicopter contract worth **₹2,901 crore** has been signed with **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**.

हेलीकॉप्टर का लगभग **₹2,901 करोड़** का अनुबंध हिंदुस्तान एयरोनॉटिक्स लिमिटेड (HAL) के साथ किया गया है।

- These helicopters will perform **maritime surveillance, search and rescue, and coastal security operations**.

ये हेलीकॉप्टर समुद्री निगरानी, खोज-और-बचाव तथा तटीय सुरक्षा अभियानों में उपयोग किए जाएंगे।

- They can operate from **coastal bases as well as ships at sea**.

ये तटीय हवाई अड्डों और समुद्र में जहाजों से भी संचालन कर सकते हैं।

3. Contract for Shtil Missile System

Shtil मिसाइल प्रणाली के लिए अनुबंध

- A separate contract worth **₹2,182 crore** has been signed with **JSC Rosoboronexport (Russia)**.
लगभग **₹2,182 करोड़** का एक अलग अनुबंध **रूस की कंपनी JSC Rosoboronexport** के साथ किया गया है।
 - The deal is for **Shtil surface-to-air missiles and launch systems** to be installed on Indian Navy frontline warships.
यह समझौता भारतीय नौसेना के अग्रिम युद्धपोतों पर **Shtil सतह-से-आकाश मिसाइल और लॉन्च सिस्टम** लगाने के लिए है।
 - These systems enhance **air defence capability against aerial threats such as aircraft, drones, and missiles**.
यह प्रणाली विमान, ड्रोन और मिसाइल जैसे हवाई खतरों से रक्षा क्षमता बढ़ाती है।
-

4. Strategic Purpose of the Deal

समझौते का रणनीतिक उद्देश्य

- The deal will improve **layered air defence capability** of the Indian Navy.
यह समझौता भारतीय नौसेना की **बहु-स्तरीय वायु रक्षा क्षमता** को मजबूत करेगा।
- It will also improve **protection of offshore installations, artificial islands, and fishermen**.
इससे **ऑफशोर प्रतिष्ठानों, कृत्रिम द्वीपों और मछुआरों की सुरक्षा** बेहतर होगी।
- The project involves **more than 200 MSMEs**, generating around **65 lakh man-hours of employment**.
इस परियोजना में **200 से अधिक MSMEs** शामिल होंगे और लगभग **65 लाख मानव-घंटे रोजगार** उत्पन्न होंगे।

ALH Mk-III हेलीकॉप्टर

Feature

Details

Manufacturer

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited

Nickname

Dhruv

Role

Maritime surveillance, rescue operations

Engine

Twin-engine helicopter

Use

Coast Guard and Navy

Key fact

- ALH Dhruv is an **indigenously developed helicopter under the Make-in-India initiative.**

ALH ध्रुव मेक-इन-इंडिया पहल के तहत विकसित स्वदेशी हेलीकॉप्टर है।

2. Shtil Missile System

Shtil मिसाइल प्रणाली

Feature	Details
Type	Surface-to-air missile
Origin	Russia
Purpose	Ship-based air defence
Target	Aircraft, drones, anti-ship missiles
Range	Around 50 km (approx)

Extra fact

- Shtil missile is the **naval version of the Buk missile system**.
Shtil मिसाइल **Buk मिसाइल प्रणाली का नौसैनिक संस्करण** है।

-
- Consider the following statements:
 - ALH Dhruv helicopters are manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
 - Shtil missile system is a surface-to-air missile used for naval air defence.
 - Indian Coast Guard works under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
 - Which of the statements given above are correct?
 - A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 2 and 3 only
 - C. 1 and 3 only
 - D. 1, 2 and 3

Scotland Becomes First Nation in UK to Approve Water Cremation

Topic

Details

Country

Scotland (part of the United Kingdom) / **W**र्द्धु च्छा
जाणवसुद्धा श्चुत्रणम्व इव श्चा व्हा

Decision

First nation in the UK to approve water cremation / **ग**र्द्धु रक्
न च व्रण द्वाव्रघ इद्वा रक्कह द्धु अचव हणचव द्धु

Other Name

Alkaline Hydrolysis / **ल**वधहा णवम्वशाशु द्धु

Approved By

Scottish Parliament / **W**र्द्धु द्धु द्धु

Purpose

Eco-friendly alternative to traditional burial or flame
cremation / **ह**वधुषघु द्धु ष ग्वशशश्च व्रण द्वाव्रघ इव
हगवधुघुश श्चुत्र श्चु द्धु ह

Year of Reform

2026 reform in funeral legislation / 2026 **र**क्कशश्च द्वाव्रघ
इव द्धु रक्कशश्च

Previous major reform

Introduction of cremation in Scotland in 1902 / **W**र्द्धु च्छा
रक्कथज्ज रक्कव्रण द्वाव्रघ इह द्धु ष ल

2. What is Water Cremation (Alkaline Hydrolysis)

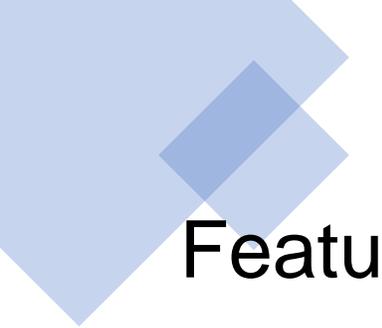
Aspect	Explanation
Definition	A process where the body is decomposed using water, heat and alkaline chemicals / एक प्रक्रिया जिसमें शरीर को पानी, गर्मी और क्षारीय रसायनों से विघटित किया जाता है
Chemicals Used	Potassium hydroxide / पोटेशियम हाइड्रॉक्साइड
Temperature	Around 150°C / लगभग 150°C
Duration	About 90 minutes / लगभग 90 मिनट
Process	Body placed in sealed chamber with water and chemicals / शरीर को पानी और रसायनों से भरे बंद चैम्बर में रखा जाता है
Result	Soft tissues dissolve leaving bones which are converted into ash / नरम ऊतक घुल जाते हैं और केवल हड्डियाँ बचती हैं जिन्हें राख में बदला जाता है

3. Environmental Advantages

Feature	Details
Carbon footprint	Lower than flame cremation / अग्नि दाह से कम कार्बन उत्सर्जन
Energy consumption	Uses less energy / कम ऊर्जा की आवश्यकता
Emissions	No mercury or carbon dioxide emissions / पारा या कार्बन डाइऑक्साइड का सीधा उत्सर्जन नहीं
Land use	No burial land required / दफन के लिए भूमि की आवश्यकता नहीं
Soil protection	Prevents soil contamination / मिट्टी प्रदूषण को कम करता है

4. Global Adoption of Water Cremation

Country	Status
United States	Legal in about 28 states / लगभग 28 राज्यों में वैध
Canada	Allowed in several provinces / कई प्रांतों में अनुमति
Ireland	Available / उपलब्ध
South Africa	Available / उपलब्ध
Australia	Available / उपलब्ध
New Zealand	Available / उपलब्ध



Feature

Burial

Flame
Cremation



Water
Cremation

Land
requirement

High

None

None

Carbon
emissions

Low but land
use high

High

Very low

Energy use

Low

High

Moderate

Environmental
impact

Soil
contamination
possible

Air pollution

Eco-friendly



Tamil Nadu Leads India in Deceased Organ Donation



Topic

Details

State

Tamil Nadu / தமிழ்நாடு

Achievement

Leading state in deceased organ donation in India /
இந்தியாவில் மறைந்த உறுப்புகள் வழங்குவதில் முன்னிலை வாய்ந்த மாநிலம்

Donors in 2026

57 deceased donors in first two months / 2026 இல்
முதல் இரண்டு மாதங்களில் 57 மறைந்த உறுப்புகள் வழங்கினர்

Implementing Authority

Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu (TRANSTAN) /
தமிழ்நாடு உறுப்புகள் வழங்கும் ஆணையகம்

Beginning of program

Formalised around 2008 / 2008-இல்
அமைக்கப்பட்டது

Major reason for success

Strong governance, public trust, and technology
integration / கடுமையான நிர்வாகம், பொது நம்பிக்கை,
தொழில்நுட்ப ஒருங்கிணைப்பு

2. Organ Donation System in Tamil Nadu

Aspect	Details
Governing body	TRANSTAN (Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu)
Key role	Coordinates hospitals, police, and transplant centres
Allocation system	Scientific and transparent allocation of organs
Technology used	Digital platforms and monitoring systems
Stakeholders	Doctors, hospitals, police, NGOs, media

3. Key Initiatives Driving Growth

Initiative	Details
Honour Walk	Public tribute to deceased organ donors / मृत दाताओं के सम्मान में कार्यक्रम
Government Order 331	Declares state honours for organ donors
Green Corridor	Dedicated traffic route for quick organ transport
Vidiyal App	Mobile & web application for transparency
Awareness Programs	Medical students and volunteers spread awareness

5. Public Trust and Ethical Framework

Feature	Details
Consent based system	Family consent required
Counselling	Families are sensitively counselled
Incentives	No monetary incentives provided
Acceptance rate	Around 75–80% after counselling
Ethical principle	Organ donation must remain voluntary

6. Extra Important Facts for Exams

National Organ Donation System in India

Institution	Role
NOTTO	National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization
ROTO	Regional Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization
SOTTO	State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization

Law Governing Organ Donation in India

Law	Details
Transplantation of Human Organs Act	1994
Amendment	2011
Purpose	Regulates organ donation and prevents organ trafficking

7. Types of Organ Donation

Type	Explanation
Living donor	Donation by a living person
Deceased donor	Organs donated after brain death
Tissue donation	Cornea, skin, bones

8. Organs That Can Be Donated

Organ	Use
Heart	Heart transplant
Liver	Liver transplant
Kidney	Kidney transplant
Lungs	Lung transplant
Pancreas	Diabetes treatment
Intestine	Digestive system transplant

9. Important Global Facts

Country	Remark
Spain	Highest organ donation rate in world
USA	Large transplant network
India	Increasing awareness but still low donation rate



Indicator

India organ donation rate

Spain donation rate

Tamil Nadu

Value

~0.8 per million population

~40+ per million population

Highest rate among Indian states



-
- Consider the following statements:
 - Tamil Nadu has one of the most advanced deceased organ donation programs in India.
 - The Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu manages the organ allocation system.
 - Organ donation in India is regulated by the Transplantation of Human Organs Act, 1994.
 - Which of the above statements are correct?
 - A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 2 and 3 only
 - C. 1, 2 and 3
 - D. 1 only

Innovators
Business
Environment
Index (IBEI) 2026



Aspect	Details
Index Name	Innovators Business Environment Index (IBEI) / सृजनशील व्यवसाय वातावरण सूचकांक
Released By	StartupBlink / अवकाश हसटब्लिंक
Year	2026
Purpose	Measures business environment for innovators and startups / सृजनशील व्यवसाय वातावरण को मापने के लिए अद्यतन उद्यमियों और स्टार्टअपों के लिए
Score Range	0–100
Focus	Regulations, capital, infrastructure, and innovation ecosystem / नियम, पूंजी, बुनियादी ढांचा, और đổi mới hệ sinh thái

2. Objective of the Index

Aspect	Details
Main Goal	Evaluate national business environments for innovators
Key Criteria	Accessibility, predictability, and low-friction systems
Focus Area	Conditions for starting and scaling businesses
Unique Feature	Focuses on inputs and enabling environment rather than outcomes

3. Methodology and Indicators

Pillar	Description
Regulation and Government	Ease of starting and operating businesses
Access to Capital	Funding availability and credit access
Taxation	Business tax policies and incentives
Digital Infrastructure	Internet speed, connectivity, digital access
Global Mobility & Openness	International accessibility and governance stability

54. India

GLOBAL RANK

#54

ASIA PACIFIC RANK

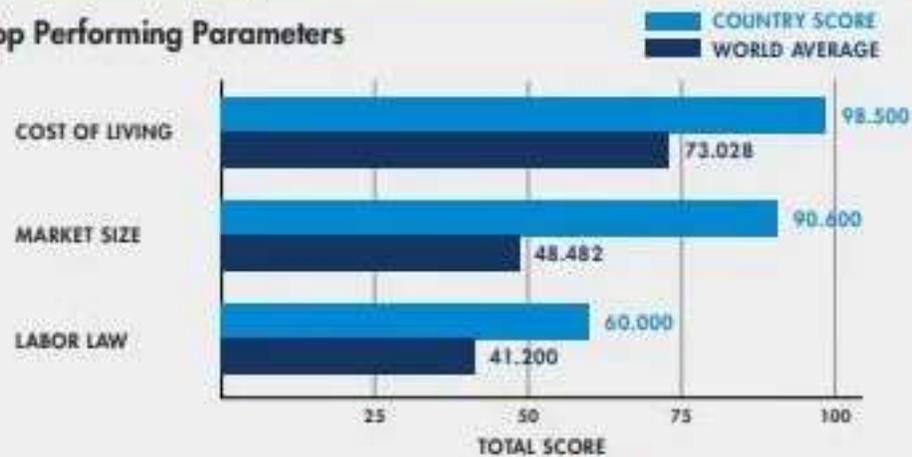
#10

Pillar Performance

GLOBAL SCORES, [RANK]



Top Performing Parameters



4. Top Countries in IBEI 2026

Rank	Country	Score
1	United States	100
2	Singapore	High score
3	United Kingdom	High score

5. India's Performance

Indicator	Data
Rank	54th
Score	55.035
Comparison	Ranked ahead of China
China Rank	85th

Startup Ecosystem Rankings

Index	Released By
Global Startup Ecosystem Index	StartupBlink
Global Innovation Index	WIPO
Ease of Doing Business (earlier)	World Bank
Global Competitiveness Index	World Economic Forum

Major Startup Hubs in India

City	Specialty
Bengaluru	IT and deep tech startups
Hyderabad	SaaS and AI startups
Delhi NCR	E-commerce and fintech
Mumbai	Fintech and financial startups

3. Top Performing Parameters of India

Parameter	India Score	World Average	Explanation
Cost of Living	98.5	73.028	Lower living cost makes India attractive for startups
Market Size	90.6	48.482	Huge domestic consumer base
Labor Law	60.0	41.2	Labour regulations supporting employment

4. Key Strengths of India's Startup Ecosystem

Factor	Details
Large Consumer Market	Over 1.4 billion population
Growing Digital Infrastructure	Rapid internet penetration
Cost Advantage	Lower operational cost for startups
Strong Tech Hubs	Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Delhi NCR
Venture Capital Growth	Increasing global investment

-
- Consider the following statements:
 - Innovators Business Environment Index (IBEI) is released by StartupBlink.
 - The index measures conditions for starting and scaling businesses.
 - India ranked within the top 20 countries in IBEI 2026.
 - Which of the statements given above are correct?
 - A. 1 and 2 only
 - B. 2 and 3 only
 - C. 1 and 3 only
 - D. 1, 2 and 3

Word of the day

Brusque:

marked by rude or peremptory shortness

Synonyms: curt, short

Usage: *I was really put off by his brusque remarks.*

Pronunciation:

<https://newsth.live/WVrrsF>

International Phonetic

Alphabet: brʊsk

Happy Holi

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What you'll get

- Coverage of all major national and international events from **January 2025 to March 2026**
- **20 high-priority topics** explained in depth so you can handle both factual and analytical questions

Topics to be Covered:

1. Government Schemes (Flagship + New Launches)

2. Budget & Taxation

3. Economic Indicators

4. Reports & Indices (India's Rank)

5. International Affairs (India + Major Summits)

6. Science & Tech

7. Environment & Ecology

8. Polity & Constitution Updates

9. Awards & Honours

10. Sports

11. Banking & Financial Market

12. Defence

13. Appointments & Resignations

14. Books & Authors

15. Important Days & Themes

16. Government Committees

17. States in News

18. India Rankings & Lists

19. Sports + Govt Sports Schemes

20. Miscellaneous Must-Do

- All video lectures will be delivered in bilingual format (Hindi + English) to ensure clarity and comfort for every learner.



Thank you 😊